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Resetting The PRAM Causes Loss Of RAM Disk Contents (6/95)

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TOPIC -----

During a recent troubleshooting session a friend of mine advised me to reset (or zap) my Parameter RAM (PRAM) as a way to "clear" my serial port. However, neither I nor my friend knew that this procedure would delete my RAM disk and its contents. Why did this happen?

DISCUSSION -----

If you are using a RAM disk, and you reset Parameter Ram (PRAM) (by simultaneously holding down the Command-Option-P-R keys at the initial startup chime) the settings in the Memory control panel revert to their factory defaults.

The default setting for a RAM disk in the Memory control panel is "off". As a result, any contents on a previously active RAM disk are lost when the PRAM is reset.

This happens regardless of whether or not the RAM disk is the startup disk. The presence of the Assistant Toolbox extension (on a Powerbook computer) does not prevent this data loss. Therefore, Apple recommends backing up all important items from a RAM disk to another disk before resetting the PRAM.

NOTE: Simply restarting the machine does not purge the contents of the RAM disk. However, selecting Shut Down from the Special menu or powering the machine off from the power switch erases the contents of the RAM disk (unless the Assistant Toolbox extension [for PowerBook computers] or similar utility [for other Macintosh computers] is installed). If the machine is shut down in this manner the contents of the RAM disk cannot be retrieved even if it is immediately restarted.

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